

SHERBORNE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

R E P O R T

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
to the

SHERBORNE RURAL SANITARY AUTHORITY

for the Year

1940.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

AREA (acres)	41,481.	POPULATION (Registrar General's estimate Midsummer 1940).	5,695.
Number of Inhabited HOUSES at end of 1940			1,620.
Rateable Value £21,544. Sum represented by a penny rate			£94.

The population of the district is as stated before but has increased by about 12,000 persons evacuated from London. The ratio of accompanied to unaccompanied is 2 - 1.

There is probably a decrease in the cattle stock of the area by about 20%.

There is an increase of up to 4,000 acres under cultivation since the beginning of the War.

There is practically no unemployment, it is even difficult now to find the necessary amount of labour in the district.

VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

	Total,	M.	F.	Rate per 1000.
Live Births (Legitimate)	64	32	32	
(Illegitimate)	11	5	6	13.2.
Still Births.	3	2	1	38.5
Deaths.	77	39	38	13.5

Deaths from puerperal causes :-

No.29. Puerperal Sepsis Nil.  
No.30. Other puerperal causes Nil.  
Nil.

Death rate of infants under one year of age :-

All infants per 1,000 live births.	40.0
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate births	46.9
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate births	Nil.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	10
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	Nil.
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	1
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	Nil.

There was little sickness in the neighbourhood but it might be stated that the children native in the local population showed more signs of catarrhal disease than did the London children, while on the other hand, the London children showed a persistence of skin disease, such as septic sores, which did not affect the local inhabitants.

It would not appear that any of the War restrictions in the neighbourhood have exercised any adverse effect on the population. It has been noticed that in the district there is a general personal loss of weight extending from half to a stone but not affecting the health or vigour of the individual.

## GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

### LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The laboratory facilities have been ample and the County Laboratory has, if anything, increased it's reputation for usefulness and help to the County.

### AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

Ambulance facilities for ordinary cases remain as in previous reports It has been able to answer all the calls made on it easily.

For infectious cases the North Dorset Joint Hospital Board has now provided a motor ambulance which remedies the complaints prevalent in previous years.

Disinfection of affected bedding has been accelerated and there is now little cause for complaint.

### NURSING IN THE HOME.

Nursing in the home remains as satisfactory as ever, but the complaints mentioned in my last report as to the restriction of Nurse's petrol are still heard and efforts should be made to ensure that sufficient petrol for their legitimate use should be readily obtainable.

### TREATMENT CENTRES AND CLINICS.

There are no special treatment centres or clinics at all in the District.

HOSPITALS. There are no Hospitals, Public or Voluntary, in the District.

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

### Water Supplies.

The water supplies of the District during the year responded satisfactorily to the increased demand made on them by the augmented population. In the Southern Parishes Area during September it seemed likely that there might be a definite shortage but the difficult period was passed. At that time about 17,000 gallons per day were being used by the Troops encamped in the Heydon side of Sherborne Park, but luckily they were moved just about the time when anxiety was being most felt.

Should the Government contemplate further extension of Camps in this neighbourhood, they would be wise to give further consideration to the increase of the water supply in this area.

It is noteworthy that the likelihood expressed in previous reports that houses in this area would avail themselves of the water supply has been fulfilled and now practically all the dwellings in this area are supplied.

The unsatisfactory nature of the water supply at Bradford Abbas still exists. The Council are suggesting methods of overcoming or meeting this complaint and considering that the largest percentage of evacuated children falls on this Parish it is essential that this matter should carefully be considered.

The routine examination of water supplies which was found to be most important, was continued throughout the year.

The difficulties of the Thornford water supply have been satisfactorily met.

### CONTAMINATION.

The contamination of the water supply at Higher Clatcombe still continues at intervals. The difficulty would be met by more complete storage arrangements, which would probably in this case be quite satisfactory or the water should be dealt with by filtration.

## DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

There have been no serious complaints of drainage or sewerage this year in the District, although it cannot be said that the conditions so often reported by me have yet been met. In fact, it appears likely that owing to War conditions that they will not be met for some time to come.

RIVERS AND STREAMS. No complaints of pollution have been received during the year.

## CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Where ever the needs of the population seem to warrant it, regular collection of night soil has been made by the Council. No nuisance of this kind has been reported in the year but no final, definite and permanent satisfactory plan has yet been agreed to.

The subject of refuse collection still provides matter for frequent debate. The frequency of the collection should be increased. It is most unsatisfactory that refuse of all kinds should be allowed to lie about in the Villages for lengthy periods. The only difficulty in the matter appears to be the question of cost.

CESSPOOLS. There are no cesspools in the District.

## SANITARY INSPECTION.

The regularity of inspection of the District was seriously hampered by other duties and the reduction of staff, but it may be fairly said that no cause for complaint remained uninvestigated and there was no reason to suppose that absence of regular visits resulted in advantage being taken of War-time conditions.

SHOPS. No action was taken under the Shops' Act, 1934.

## CAMPING SITES.

The camping site nuisances have practically been terminated by War conditions and the site previously complained of has now been put to a better use namely that of cultivation. A few caravans appear from time to time, they are watched and cause no trouble. There are no licensed sites.

SMOKE ABATEMENT. No action has been necessary with a view to smoke abatement.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS. There are no swimming baths or pools in the District which are open to the public.

ERADICATION OF BED BUG. No action has been necessary during the year for the eradication of the bed bug.

SCHOOLS. Regular inspection of schools has been continued as with their increased population and use it is likely that trouble may arise.

The water supply at Bradford Abbas School complained of several times, should shortly be remedied.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE. There was especially little infectious disease in the neighbourhood.

Tabular Statement of Inspections made by the Sanitary Inspector.

Housing.	81.	Public Health Act.	19.
Dairies.	48.	Factories.	3.
Shops.	5.	Meat Inspections.	54.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

With the difficulty of keeping up regularity of inspections previously referred to, it has been found better to concentrate chiefly more on the retailers of milk in the District than those who supply milk in bulk to the big factories where it is carefully dealt with. It must be realised that a faulty supply of milk in the present condition might lead to a serious outbreak of infectious disease and every endeavour should be made to prevent such a calamity.

It is a matter of great regret that the advice so often given for an extension of pasteurisation has met with so little success, and the Council would be wise not to abate their efforts to securing a greater extension of the system.

The Council should constantly bear in mind the risk of milk-borne disease as such a large School population of all kinds is supplied by the Sherborne Rural Area.

#### PREVALENCE OF, and CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS and OTHER DISEASE.

There is little that can be added to what has been said in previous reports. Conditions remain satisfactory. Immunization against diphtheria will be undertaken in the near future.

#### NON-IDENTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The Home at "The Beeches", started as soon as emigration from London commenced, was found quite competent to deal with all the work asked of it.

It had been thought in 1939 that it would be probably needed for more serious infectious disease, but in practice it turned out that it was merely wanted to deal with the problems of septic sore, scabies and bedwetters, as well as for children who for various other deficiencies of health were not welcome by the average householder.

The number of cases of scabies at one time increased very considerably and the Yeatman Hospital Sherborne, very generously set aside the necessary accommodation to deal with the matter. With modern methods of treatment these cases were found easily and quickly curable and soon dropped in number.

With regard to the question of Evacuation generally, the unaccompanied children especially have thrived well, have been happy, have been well cared and very kindly treated by their hosts, and it is true to say that now many householders would regret the loss of these children were they to leave.

With the accompanied children it has not been so well, the obvious difficulty of the mother and the hostess using the same household utensils has been difficult to overcome and neither the parents or the children have been so happy as the other class.

To meet the deficiency of accommodation the Council tried the experiment of using once again houses that they had officially previously condemned. This experiment was a complete failure as it was found that these houses were too far gone ever again to be kept in a state of adequate repair.

Experience of the wave of Evacuation leads ~~one~~ to the conclusion that it would be a good thing if every town-bred children spent at least one or two years of its life in a prolonged visit to the country. Many of these children after a time display considerable interest in country affairs and in pursuits of which on their arrival they are completely ignorant and it is likely that this experiment is of great permanent value to them.

(Signed).

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